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POLISH VIEWS ON CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN SECURITY

BY

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ABSTRACT

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A spectacular change has taken place with regard to Poland's views on European security since the bloodless Polish revolution in 1989. These views evolved from an initial concept of maintaining the Cold War *status quo*, to a radical reorientation toward recognizing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a former adversary, as the basic architecture for future European security.

This essay offers a brief review of Poland's unique historical experiences which lay the foundation for its current security policy. Additionally a critical analysis of Poland's evolving views for alternative concepts of European security architecture are provided.

Polish Views on Central and East European Security

"No one gave more trouble than the Poles", wrote the British Prime Minister David L. George in his memoirs of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.¹ No doubt, this observation can be reaffirmed by many contemporary political leaders. Poland's obstinate and sometimes impatient efforts to gain membership in European and Euro-Atlantic structures of integration confuses some western leaders, who have no clear vision of the future of international order. Conversely they also irritate Russia which shows a strong will to restore the former Soviet zone of influence.

A dramatic change has taken place in the fundamental "parameters" of thinking about European security. During the post-Cold War era, Europe has been given the unique opportunity to create a new international order based on common values: democracy, human rights and the right of nations to self-determination. The people of Poland want to actively participate in the process of shaping this new international order.

This essay offers a brief review of Poland's unique historical experiences which lay the foundation for its current security policy. Additionally a critical analysis of Poland's evolving views for alternative concepts of European security architecture are provided.

LESSONS LEARNED - ROOTS OF POLISH SECURITY POLICY

Geographically Poland is "a bridge" spanning two parts of Europe, but since the 10th century Poles have identified themselves as an element of Western European civilization. In 966 the first historical ruler of Poland, Mieszko I accepted Western Christianity and established political relations with Bohemians, Rome and the German Empire. Poland's conversion to Christianity was a conscious political move which resulted in the consolidation of the Polish state.²

Over the centuries, its central geographic location in Europe has made it impossible for Poland to take the position of a neutral state. The lack of natural frontiers such as major rivers or mountain ranges has resulted in frequent invasions by the Germans, Russians, Tartars, Swedes` and Turks. Historically the only way the Poles have been able to improve their military-political situation has been by securing external allies.³ This trend has manifested itself since the Middle Ages. As early as the fourteenth century a Polish-Lithuanian alliance was formed which changed the balance of power in Central and Eastern Europe. It created a force strong enough to defeat the Teutonic Knights; at that time, considered to be the strongest military and financial power in Europe. As a result of the establishment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a large part of Europe between the Baltic and the Black Sea was successfully defended for four centuries against military invasion, and simultaneously

integrated with Western culture.⁴

Since the seventeenth century Poland has declined as a great power.⁵ Poland's neighbors Russia, Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire systematically promoted its internal troubles and intervened in Polish affairs.⁶ It was during the period 1792-1795 that "the alliance of the three Black Eagles" totally dismembered Poland and halted efforts by Poles to put their state in order⁷.

The Poles tried unsuccessfully to resurrect their independent state. A long series of national uprisings⁸ failed to gain the objective and exhausted the nation. Two different programs of national policy crystallized in Poland during this period. The first program advocated military action supported by political-military assistance from France. The second program supported by "political realists" recommended a *modus vivendi* with powerful neighbors and sought the support of any one of them for the unification and self-government of Polish lands which would ultimately lead to Poland's independence.

The outcome of World War I changed the political order in Europe and gave Poland its chance. While the Central Powers lost the war Russia did not win. A temporary vacuum of power in Central-East Europe provided the Polish nation with an opportunity to achieve independence. Poles took advantage of the situation. They created their own armed forces and undertook intensive military and diplomatic activity.⁹ As a result of these efforts in November of 1918 The Polish Republic came into existence.

Favorable conditions enabled other nations in Central and Eastern Europe to create their own states. Warsaw supported both politically and militarily attempts by Estonia, Latvia and the Ukraine to gain real independence.¹⁰ All new states were relatively weak; none of them were strong enough alone to face the future threats of their powerful neighbors: Germany and Soviet Russia. Therefore Poland tried to organize close cooperation with countries in the region.¹¹ Unfortunately the final results of these efforts were rather limited. ¹²

The lack of an effective system of alliance within the region compelled Polish leaders to seek support from Western Europe. The Polish-French alliance of 1921,¹³ became the cornerstone of Poland's security policy. The Polish relationship with Germany and Soviet Russia had to be gradually redirected toward the maintenance of "equilibrium" or "equal distance" among them. Polish alliances did not work very well.¹⁴ France and Britain failed to assist in the military campaign when initially German and later Soviet troops attacked Poland in September of 1939. The end of WWII also failed to bring Poland real independence. At a critical moment in its history, Poland was abandoned by the Western allies. Allied discussions regarding Poland's matters took place without Polish participation. In 1943 at the first meeting of "The Big Three" at Teheran, the Western Powers accepted the Soviet solution of Poland's future; the Curzon Line (rejected by Poland in 1920) as the basis for the Polish eastern frontier, and a division of Europe into zones of

post-war influence which determined that Poland would fall under Soviet dominance.¹⁵

The security policy of the new Polish state, the People's Republic, was a modern version of "political realism" defined largely by the bitter experiences of World War II,¹⁶ and Poland's status as a part of the Soviet's "external empire". Unquestionably Poland's primary goal was to ensure national self-preservation and territorial integrity within its new borders.

As a result of the decisions made by the victorious powers Poland's borders were changed dramatically.¹⁷ Acquired from Germany the Recovered Lands¹⁸, after the expulsion of Germans, was repopulated by refugees and those Poles transferred from the territories annexed by the Soviet Union. The Potsdam Conference failed to define Poland's western frontier. Thus, the acquisition of the Oder-Neisse territories carried the odium of something provisional and provided a basis for Germany's claim to its former lands. Since the Western Territories constitute a third of post-war Poland, this issue became vital for the nation.¹⁹ The refusal of the Federal Republic to officially recognize the Oder-Neisse frontier was the origin of prolonged difficulties in Polish-German relations. It also provided the Polish and Soviet communists a constant opportunity to remind the nation that this frontier was unequivocally guaranteed only by the Soviet Union.

Polish fears were strengthened by an ambiguous "non-commitment" policy of the Western Powers toward the border

dispute,²⁰ and some aspects of the Federal Republic's membership in NATO. In 1960 the Federal Chancellor, Conrad Adenauer, reassured those expelled from the Recovered Lands "that their homeland would be assured, if West Germany remained loyal to NATO."²¹ In this context, from the Polish perspective, NATO could only be perceived as hostile, and the necessity of an alliance with the Soviet Union as a cornerstone of Poland's security policy could not be openly questioned.²²

In the late 50's Polish leaders recognized a relaxation of tensions in Central Europe as the most important of Poland's national interests. Any military conflict between the two opposite blocks would threaten the very existence of the Polish nation. As a result, in spite of limited freedom of political choice, Poland undertook her own political initiatives to create a degree of confidence between two political-military pacts.

The most famous of Poland's initiatives was the so-called "Rapacki Plan", first presented by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Adam Rapacki in 1956. He proposed, as a possible first step toward the relaxation of tensions, to establish a nuclear-free zone that included Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Holland. Unfortunately the "Rapacki Plan" and the "Gomulka Plan" (presented in 1964), which proposed to freeze the level of armaments in Central Europe, was never seriously discussed.²³ Later Rapacki developed a broader theory of "constructive coexistence" - the basis for a new Polish policy toward the West.²⁴ This policy provided for a gradual growth of mutual

understanding and cooperation between Poland and the West that enabled it to enlarge its "area of sovereignty" within the Soviet bloc, which culminated in the bloodless Polish revolution of 1989.

Poland's historical experiences have been discussed by Polish historians, politicians and the citizenry at large. The conclusions drawn from these discussions have became the basis for the present Polish security policy addressed below.

Long-lived European peace must be built on the basis of military cooperation and the gradual integration of Central and Eastern European nations into existing European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. As a result Poland would oppose any attempt to base European security architecture once again on the balance of power principle. Such an approach is incompatible with such values as democracy and the rights of nations for self-determination. Moreover, it would be an invitation to reopen the competition for spheres of influence and the arms race.

For Poland the most important geopolitical factor is its location between Germany and Russia. Throughout its history the Polish state has fought an unequal battle against them. Deadly dangerous "contracts" between Poland's powerful neighbors twice resulted with the partition of the Polish state.²⁵ A "game" has been played for the Poland's sovereignty and survival as a free and independent nation. It is obvious, that Poland must avoid

repeating open confrontation on two fronts in the future.

During centuries the position of the Western Powers toward Central and Eastern European nations has been undecided and ambiguous.²⁶ The West has always been ready to sacrifice the interests of the smaller nations to enhance their own interests. The Yalta agreement is a clear example that supports this thesis. "Nothing concerning Poland should be decided without Poland's Participation"²⁷ must be the leading principle of Polish diplomacy.

A temporary weakness or fall of superpowers, has always created in Central-Eastern Europe a vacuum of power which has provided the Poles, Hungarians, Balts and other peoples in the region the opportunity to reestablish their national sovereignty. These favorable conditions were generally short term; i.e. "big brothers" undertook decisive action to rebuild their "lost" spheres of influence. Under these circumstances relatively weak and atomized new states had been independent for only a brief period. The only way these states could improve their military-political situation was by close regional cooperation and seeking ties to existing, well established and effective defence alliances.

SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN POST-COLD WAR EUROPE - VIEW FROM WARSAW

The first non-communist Polish government established in 1989 was given a unique opportunity to create a new security policy based on national interest. This opportunity arose during a dramatic changing military-political situation in Europe, highlighted by the diminution and gradual disintegration of the Soviet bloc, and indeed the Soviet Union itself. Coupled with the beginning of Germany's unification the creation of a new security policy became extremely difficult. The basic aim of Poland's national security policy has always been an independent and safe Poland in a safe Europe. The fundamental precepts of this policy are the permanency of existing borders, a peaceful solution of all disputes and the support for the idea of establishing an effective pan-European security system.

Initially Poland's freedom of political choice was limited by the revitalization of the Western frontier question. Though Poland had signed corresponding treaties with both East and the West Germany that recognized existing borders; the expected unification could change the situation dramatically. A reemergence of the border issue could inflame the historic question.

Federal Chancellor Kohl's attitude on this issue was "ambiguous", reported the Polish Parliamentary president Kozakiewicz visiting Bonn in December 89: "...on the one hand, Kohl referred to the Warsaw Treaty of 1970 and the inviolability

of the borders that had been agreed to in this treaty by the FRG and Poland, and also stressed that there were no aggressive aspirations aimed at changing existing borders. On the other hand, Kohl insisted that juridically, the German Reich continued to exist within the borders of 1937."²⁸

The Polish position, presented by Premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki was clear: "We have no intention of negotiating with anyone over the line of this border. It is an established part of the European order... we cannot enter the new historical stage which is being created by the process of German unification,..., with any ambiguity whatsoever with regard to the border of unified Germany."²⁹

Under these circumstances, Polish leaders had expressed conditional support for the unification of Germany.³⁰ They expected, that the Polish position in the border dispute would receive the vital support of the USSR. At the beginning of 1990, from Warsaw's perspective, the Soviet Union being reformed by Mikhail Gorbachev, seemed to be a candidate for a true partner-like relationship. Ergo the Polish government initially presented a concept of an European security architecture that anticipated maintaining the *status quo* through continued presence of Soviet troops on German territory.³¹ This concept also proposed the preservation of existing institutions among them the Warsaw Pact, albeit modified to be primarily a political consultative structure.³² According to this concept an enhanced Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would become the pillar

of a future pan-European security system.³³

New ideas, such as a future Poland's membership in European organizations, were expressed by Polish leaders very carefully: "We are interested in initiating at the appropriate time the procedure for associating Poland with the European Community (EC), while respecting our ties with other Central European countries, including the Soviet Union."³⁴

During 1990 Poland's position concerning some of the assumptions of its security policy changed significantly. There were some important reasons for this. Successful Polish-German negotiations resulted in a definitive recognition of Poland's western frontier by both the Bundestag and the Volkskammer³⁵, and the signing of the Polish-German Border Treaty on behalf of a united Germany on 14 Nov 1990.³⁶ With a resolution to this problem, the primary source of antagonism between Poland and Germany was eliminated.

On the other hand, Polish leaders were disappointed with the position taken by the Soviet Union during the process of German unification which jeopardized the creation of a real partnership between Poland and the USSR.³⁷ Additionally, events inside the USSR like the incidents in Baku and the beginning of the Lithuanian crisis, called into question the future of the "perestroyka" process and the Soviet Union's internal stability.

At the end of 1990 new notions emerged in Polish national security policy. An influential political group - the Forum of the Democratic Right (FPD) published its political manifesto

which suggested a decisive westwardly oriented policy, support for the creation of "new sovereign elements" in the European part of the USSR, and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.³⁸ The manifesto supported the idea of elaborating a new system of European security based on NATO and the presence of American troops as an essential condition for peace in Europe.

Almost immediately these recommendations were incorporated into "official" Polish policy. Poland's Eastern policy changed initially toward parallel-track relations both with the Soviet Union and separate republics which declared their sovereignty, and then the full recognition of sovereignty of these republics.³⁹ Poland began negotiations with the USSR on the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Poland, and jointly with Hungary and Czechoslovakia undertook steps toward the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. In its place Poland proposed close trilateral cooperation with these countries that had been the most advanced in their political and economic transformation.⁴⁰

In Polish policy toward the West arose a new element in 1991; i.e., a fresh view on NATO as a vital part of European security and the main stabilizing factor on the continent.⁴¹ Polish officials still emphasized that "Poland does not intend to join NATO in the foreseeable future"⁴², but simultaneously they called for more intensive cooperation with security organizations of the Western World such as NATO and the Western European Union.

From the very beginning Poland has rejected another concept

of European security architecture - the idea of establishing a neutral military zone consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary (which was unofficially presented by Henry Kissinger during his stay in Warsaw at the end of 1990).⁴³ Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski argued: "The whole of Europe should be treated as a homogeneous area of security... From the point of view of security, Central Europe in particular, cannot become a gray, buffer, or neutral zone. The area in such a situation, because of its geographical situation, will easily become the object of rivalry of stronger states."⁴⁴ In the same speech Skubiszewski presented other tenets of contemporary Polish security policy:

- support for U.S. military presence in Europe and a reduction of nuclear and conventional forces as important elements of peace and stabilization on the continent;
- a proposal to develop a security system within the CSCE by the creation of an effective mechanism of obligatory action in crisis situations and a fusion of the CSCE and NATO;
- Poland's desire to participate in European integration coupled with Central-East European regional cooperation.⁴⁵

After two years of independence Poles were still looking into various opportunities and seeking individual solutions. The concept of their search has been: "We are opening up to the West, but not closing to the East".⁴⁶

Poland's security policy crystallized by the end of 1992. In November 1992 President Lech Wałęsa signed a government white

paper on the main principles of the Polish security policy from 1993-2000. This document specified that Poland would strive to become a member of NATO by the year 2000.⁴⁷ It also included the new Polish Military Doctrine, which has been strictly defensive in nature, with a primary goal of defending the state's security and territorial integrity.

There were some important factors which influenced the final shape of the Polish security policy. The collapse of the USSR resulted in a certain destabilization on Poland's Eastern borders. The international community, the UN and CSCE, have shown themselves to be helpless in a number crisis situations; e.g., Bosnia and Chechnia. Also a sober analysis of the complexity and interdependence of European and Euro-Atlantic structures pointed out that Polish aspirations expressed earlier to obtain membership in the European Community (now European Union) need to be complemented by parallel efforts aimed at full membership in NATO.

Polish leaders recognize the fact that European security should be based on the existing institutions. Europe, as never before in its history, has created a number of institutions for cooperation on security issues. Thus the new architecture of European security does not mean that more of them are required; it means making the best use of existing ones. Within these institutions NATO continues to be the most important for European relations. It is more than just a collective defence system. In the post-Cold War era NATO is an effective means for preventing

the "re-nationalization" of security issues and the reemergence of political and military rivalry among the largest West European countries. The military-political power of NATO may determine the viability of the decisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN. Also a new strategic concept adopted by NATO in 1991, which puts the emphasis on crisis management and cooperation with other international organizations, helped to recognize a new role for NATO in the future European security system. Thus NATO remains a decisive factor of stability on the continent and any realistic planning of European security must include NATO as its basic element.

The principal component of the Polish vision of a future European security architecture became an expansion of the area of security and stabilization being formed by NATO. NATO should be expanded through including in the alliance those countries that share its goals and values, which also have the desire and are capable of effectively contributing to the accomplishment of those goals. Enlargement should be an open-ended, transparent process that would not *a priori* exclude anyone. It should be accompanied by other forms of close relationships between NATO and those countries which would not want or could not yet become members of the alliance, especially Russia and the Ukraine. These relations would cover issues of peace and security as well as economic contacts.

Poland strongly supported the thesis that NATO should preserve its current Euro-Atlantic character. Two world wars, the

Cold War and the Balkan crisis have clearly demonstrated the tremendous significance on European security and stability of the active involvement and leadership of the United States. When in 1918, just after WWI, America decided to withdraw from Europe, a new great war broke out after only twenty years of peace. Since the end of WWII, America has maintained its presence in Europe and the continent has enjoyed peace for over fifty years.

The second pillar of European security requires strengthening pan-European institutions, in particular the OSCE, but also other existing and developed systems of confidence and security-building measures (CFE Treaty, Open Skies Treaty and others). Eventually, the third integral element of a European security architecture should be created by partner-like bilateral relationships between all countries in conjunction with close regional cooperation. Poland fully supports the full sovereignty and independence of the new states which have emerged since the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states. In the opinion of the majority of Polish political experts "The independence of those countries is one of the conditions of (Polish) sovereignty and stable development.."⁴⁸, because their continuing sovereignty would act as an buffer against the revitalization of Russian hegemony of Eastern and Central Europe.

Thus mature Polish security policy expresses itself in a radical, pro-Western reorientation in international affairs and strives for lasting integration within the European Union and

NATO. Membership in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures has been an integral element of Polish national security policy since 1992 and enjoys the support of all significant Polish political parties and movements. Despite their diversity, this policy is supported by the vast majority of Poles. Both Polish politicians and the general population have no doubts that Poland should seek links with Western European defense alliances and collective security systems.⁴⁹ Simultaneously Poland has rejected, as extremely vague and unconvincing, other conceptions of European security, which have been proposed by the opponents of NATO enlargement. These concepts can be outlined in the few essential theses described below.

The concept of so-called criss-crossing guarantees for Central and East European countries by Russia and the West European countries, has been presented on various occasions by Russian leaders and diplomats. In the opinion of Polish analysts following this course will result in:

- the current division of Europe into parts with unequal security status will be preserved, in particular Central-Eastern Europe will be kept as a "gray zone" and the object of external rivalry;
- Central-Eastern Europe will remain an object and not a sovereign subject of European relations, moreover the states guaranteeing its security would also retain the right to decide other issues of this region (in the light of prolonged Polish experiences with Russian "guarantees" this aspect is particularly

sensitive).

Another idea, the concept of creating a sub-regional security system of Central-East European security, is not very realistic. The experiences of the interwar period and the negative attitude of some states to the idea of transforming the Visegrad Group into a closer form of political cooperation indicates the extreme difficulty of bringing this concept to reality.⁵⁰ Moreover, given the potential of the states of the region, the effectiveness of such a system would be questionable, especially in facing potential external dangers.

Finally strongly supported by Russia, the idea of a pan-European security system based on a radical reform of the OSCE could be realized. During the period 1989-1991 Poland supported a similar proposal, however today this concept from the Polish perspective seems highly unrealistic. At first it is doubtful if a radical transformation of this institution, with a membership of more than 50 states, could be possible at all due to the number of states and their diverse interests. Moreover there would be great uncertainty as to whether this "modernized OSCE" would be effective and whether the United States would be a member. This does not mean that the notion of developing this institution, which gives European states the sense and right of participation in solving the problems of the continent, should be rejected. However until a viable OSCE is created that includes the United States, a strong and inclusive NATO is still Europe's best hope.

RECOMENDATIONS

This essay has shown that since the bloodless revolution in 1989 Polish views on European security have significantly evolved. From an initial careful concept of maintaining some elements of the Cold War *status quo*, Poland now views NATO as a foundation for the future architecture of European security.

It is necessary to underscore, that fundamental assumptions of Poland's national security policy have not changed since the country's transformation in 1989, in spite of frequent changes of governments that represented different political bases. The primary goal of this policy has remained to ensure the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Poland. Polish leaders always emphasized that the architecture of European security must be built on the basis of military cooperation and gradual integration of all European states. During the period of 1989-1992 the way Poland's security policy had been implemented changed its "center of gravity" toward seeking closer ties with Western institutions.

Poland's efforts to gain membership in the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance are the result of a solemn examination of both the Polish historical experience and the experiences of the West European states in building security through military and economic integration. At present Poland is not directly threatened by any country. This fact has been publicly recognized by Polish political leaders. Poland wishes to join NATO not in

order to seek guarantees against any specific present danger. Nevertheless Poland's central location in Europe requires that Poland can only be safe in a secure Europe. Because of this Poland cannot remain indifferent in a high stakes political game. The stakes of the game will shape the architecture of European security, with an impact similar to that of Yalta's "international order". Poland's integration with the West would serve not only its own interests but also those of the West European countries and the United States as well. Among the anticipated candidates for membership in NATO, no other country matches the potential strategic significance of Poland in terms of population, size and geostrategic location. Moreover, Poles do not consider their membership in the Alliance as a one-sided security guarantee. Throughout history Poland has treated its military alliances as unequivocal obligations, and history provides numerous examples of Poland's steadfastness in meeting such obligations. At present a Polish battalion is a part of a NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia. Poland is undertaking this effort primarily in the name of building peace in Europe, but also with a sense of obligation imposed on us as a country aspiring for NATO membership.

For Poles integration with European and Euro-Atlantic structures will be a difficult process requiring consistent and sustained cooperation of the entire society. It will be a challenge of historical proportions, comparable with its conversion to Western Christianity, which a thousand years ago

strengthened Poland's position in Europe. During that time, numerous and strong Pomeranian and Polabian tribes remained pagan, and did not include themselves into the main stream of European civilization. As a result they lost their independence and finally disappeared. Similarly, voluntary isolation and misuse of the chance to join NATO and other critical Euro-Atlantic organizations can lead Poland to the diminution of its position in Europe, and ultimately to the loss of its freedom and sovereignty.

ENDNOTES

1. David L. George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference (New Haven, Conn., 1939), Vol.I, 201.
2. Mieszko's I oldest son, Boleslaus the Brave extended his rule to the whole region between the Oder and Bug rivers, and from the Carpathian Mountains to the Baltic Sea. He was strong enough to be a partner in the German Emperor Otto III's plans of establishing a universal western empire. It was a brief dream of German Emperor Otto III, to restore the former Roman Empire. Boleslaus the Brave strongly supported this concept. The premature death of Otto III determined the end of his idea of "United Europe".
Norman Davies, God's Playground, A History of Poland, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 63, 82.
3. In the Middle Ages Poland also made an attempt to establish a new kind of relationship between European nations. During the Council of Constance (1415) the Polish delegation openly proclaimed the right of all nations, even should they be pagans, to their land and territorial independence and opposed conversion by the sword.
4. Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth existed for four centuries 1386 -1791, longer than any other federation in European history except the Danish-Norwegian Union (1357-1814).
M.K. Dziewanowski, Joseph Pilsudski A European Federalist, 1918-1922 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publications, 1979), 23.
- 5."From 1648 it became clear that Poland was threatened with catastrophe and disorder. A nation that had been strong and flourishing slipped into poverty and disorder, from which it never recovered till the disaster of the Partitions....Between 1600 and 1700 Poland had only fifteen years without a war, while Britain had seventy-five."
Stanislaw Kot, Five Centuries of Polish Learning (Basil Blacwell, Oxford, 1941), 11-12.
- 6.In 1717 surrounded by Russian troops the Polish Sejm (Polish Parliament) was forced to underline Poland's dependence upon Russia, and legalize its right to intervene in Polish affairs at will. Officially The Russian Tsar undertook to guarantee stability in Poland and the so-called "golden freedom" - the rights of Polish gentry. Since 1717, during two hundred and seventy years, the Russian protectorate has only been interrupted for the twenty-four years between 1915 and 1939.
- 7."The Republic of Poland-Lithuania was not destroyed because of its internal anarchy. It was destroyed because it rapidly tried to reform itself"

Norman Davies, God's Playground, A History of Poland
(Columbia University Press, New York 1984), vol.1, 527.

8. In 1806-10, in 1830-31, in 1846-48, and 1863-64.

9. Polish National Committee, which represented Poland on the side of the western allies organized the Polish army that fought under the French on the western front. National armed forces were established in Poland by Jozef Pilsudski. Polish politicians Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Paderewski were very active both in Europe and in the USA. An important factor which strongly supported Polish efforts was the stand taken by the US President Woodrow Wilson; the thirteenth of Wilson's "Fourteen Points" on peace in Europe spoke of "united, independent and autonomous Poland with free, unrestricted access to the sea".

Other Western Powers abandoned their rigid opposition and officially supported Polish independence barely in 1918 (later than the Central Powers and the Bolsheviks). This change largely was a result of their search for any means possible of troubling Germany. "...the first specific joint guarantee by all the Allies for the "restoration of Poland in its historical and geographical limits" was not made until 2 March 1918, and then in curiously obscure circumstances. It was made at Jassy in Romania where Allied negotiators were trying to persuade Poles...., that they should continue the fight against Germany."

Norman Davies, God's Playground, A History of Poland
(Columbia University Press, New York 1984), vol.2, 388.

10. In 1919 20,000 Polish troops successfully supported the Latvian army against overwhelming Bolshevik forces. Parallel to the military operations, Poland sponsored a conference for cooperation of the Baltic states in Helsinki. On April 21, 1920 the Polish-Ukrainian treaty was signed. Poland recognized the right of the Ukraine to independent political existence and provided military support for its government. Unfortunately the Polish-Ukrainian military venture into Kiev failed and finally resulted in the Soviet invasion of Poland in the summer of 1920.

11. Immediately after WWI Jozef Pilsudski, the head of the reborn Polish Republic, "planned a union of all countries menaced by the common German and Russian danger...His eyes went from the snows of Sweden and Finland to the mosques of Turkey."

Adam Bromke, Poland's politics (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 41.

12. During the mid-1930s the Polish minister of foreign affairs Jozef Beck strove to organize a bloc of states along a Bucharest-Helsinki axis. Poland managed to establish closer cooperation only with Romania and Hungary in the south, and Estonia in the north. Most of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe did not support Polish plans. There were different reasons for that;

e.g., historical antagonism, strong nationalism inside young states and finally the influence of the Soviet Union's and German's "divide and rule" policy.

During the period 1938-1939, Central and East European countries also refused the Franco-British plan of a security system which included Soviet Russia. The Soviet government persisted that this system must include guarantees for Romania, Poland, the Baltic Republics and Finland. These countries did not want any guarantees of their security from the Soviet Union. They absolutely refused the Red Army's presence on their soil because they were sure that once Soviets were established on their land, they would never leave.

Minister Beck "made it clear that he believed the Russian demand to enter Poland was only an attempt to obtain by diplomatic means what it had failed to accomplish by war in 1920".

Richard M. Watt, Bitter Glory, Poland and Its Fate (Simon and Schuster, New York 1979), 407.

13. Completed by the Polish-British alliance in 1939.

14. In March 1933 the French government did not support Pilsudski's "unofficial" proposition to stop Hitler by a preventive war. French leaders also did not answer to the demonstration of Polish loyalty and readiness to support military action against Germany after its reoccupation of the Rheinland.

Ibid., 321-322, 372-373.

15. Stalin's views on the "Polish Question" had radically changed after the German invasion of the USSR. Before 1941 the Soviet leader had shown a strong will to destroy "pardon the expression, a state"; it was his favorite term for The Polish Republic. He achieved this aim as a fulfillment of the secret part of the Molotov- Ribbentrop agreement in September 1939. During the period 1939-1941 the Soviet Union was seeking to prevent any chance to restore an independent Polish state in the future. Stalin and Hitler competed in their desire to reduce the Poles to the condition of a slave-nation and then totally annihilate them. In 1941 the Soviets turned for Polish assistance, since this year Stalin had presented his desire to restore "a strong and independent Poland". Of course, his understanding of terms "strength" and "independence" differed from that which were held by Poles.

16. World War II was a real cataclysm for Poland. Poland's losses were the heaviest among all the Allied nations: 220 of every 1000 Poles were killed (over six million people). Corresponding figures for Yugoslavia were 108; USSR, 40; Czechoslovakia and France, 15; United Kingdom, 8; the United States, 1.4.

In material resources Poland lost 38 percent of its national wealth (France lost 1.5 per cent, Britain 0.8 per cent).

Wydawnictwo Zachodnie, Straty wojenne Polski w latach 1939-

1945 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Zachodnie, 1960), 41-42.

17. Poland was moved bodily 250 kilometers (150 miles) to the west. The territory lost to the USSR on the east (178,220 sq km - 70,000 sq miles) greatly exceeded the territory acquired from Germany (101,200 sq km - 40,000 sq miles) as compensation.

Norman Davies, God's Playground, A History of Poland (Columbia University Press, New York 1984), vol.2, 489.

18. This was an official name for territories acquired from Germany which referred to the fact, that they were a part of the first Polish state that were lost during centuries of German colonization.

19. The possibility that the USSR might ever give back the former Polish lands beyond the Bug river (so-called Curzon line) was not even seriously considered in Poland.

20. In the 1960's the influential American periodical "Foreign Affairs", which includes in its editorial board many prominent US politicians (e.g. McCloy, Kennan, Alan Dulles) urged the United States "to make a formal declaration, together with the NATO countries, that in any future negotiations on a German peace treaty, Poland would not be pressed or compelled to accept any alteration of the present Oder-Neisse frontier which it felt to be contrary to its basic interests... Officially Washington could not bring itself to accept any such conclusions..."

Hansjakob Stehle, The Independent Satellite, Society and Politics in Poland Since 1945 (Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York 1965), 242.

21. From the speech given by the Federal Chancellor Adenauer during a meeting of East Prussian expellees in Dusseldorf on 10 July 1960.

Ibid., 277.

22. A vision of a reunified Germany, armed with nuclear weapons and supported by NATO, standing on the Oder-Neisse and demanding revision of the frontier - became a "Polish nightmare" in the 1960's. (Worse case can be only a vision of Germany which follows in Ribbentrop's footsteps to Moscow)

However, as early as the 1960's some Polish non-governmental political analysts presented slightly different opinions, they supported Poland's membership in the Warsaw Pact but perceived NATO as a stabilizing factor in the Polish-German dispute, "One cannot approach the problem in the way one did in the years 1919-1939...Germany is not in a position to attack us, for in the first place, we belong to a military bloc whose strength is much greater than the military potential of West Germany, and secondly, the incorporation of the Federal Republic in the Atlantic system transfers the conflict to a much wider plane"

Stanislaw Stomma, "Is there a German threat?", Tygodnik

Powszechny, no.33, 1962.

23. Presented in 1964 the "Gomulka Plan" proposed to freeze national armaments. Both Polish plans have never been seriously discussed for different reasons. In 1957, the Bundestag election had been won by the Adenauer government which presented a program that included equipping the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons. Other Western leaders argued that the Rapacki Plan left out of account the "superior strength of Soviet conventional forces".

Also the first Soviet reaction for the Polish proposal was cool, "Only after months of quiet persuasion did the Poles succeed in getting the Soviet Union's agreement to take the first concrete step..."

Hansjakob Stehle, The Independent Satellite, Society and Politics in Poland Since 1945 (Frederick A.Praeger, Publishers, New York 1965), 222.

24. In Rapacki's opinion constructive coexistence should finally lead to the end of Cold War: "...only sincere coexistence can lead to relaxation of tension and to confidence and end the division of the world into two opposing camps"

Ibid., 223.

25. First in the 18th century, and the second in 1939 - as fulfillment of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, there were many German-Russian attempts to isolate Poland and then reach agreements against it in European history. As an example, documents were found in the German archives after World War II revealed, that in 1919 and 1920 the Soviet government in an unofficial way offered Germans cooperation in destroying the Versailles settlement and than re-establishing the pre-1914 boundaries without the Polish state.

M.K. Dziewanowski, Joseph Pilsudski A European Federalist, 1918-1922 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publications, 1979), 199.

26. The West viewed this region as a political no-man's-land, a chaotic ethnic conglomeration which, for its own good, should be a part of well established empires. The Western Powers encouraged and supported national self-determination movements in this region in order to use them as tools against deadly dangerous enemies; i.e., Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, Central Powers during WWI, Third Reich during WWII and Soviet Union during the Cold-War.

Western leaders also have often failed to recognize the whole complexity and interdependence issues of European security. In the late 1930s, "In the minds of French politicians ...the destruction of the Polish state was not strictly equivalent to the downfall of France".

Stanislaw Mackiewicz, Colonel Beck and His Policy (London 1944), 77.

27. This is a "free" modification of an historical Polish slogan. Since 1505, when the Sejm passed the constitution called *Nihil Novi*, legislation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth remained firmly in the Nobility's control. Thereafter, the slogan "Nothing concerning us without us" remained the basic concept of the contemporary Polish "Noble Democracy".

28. Report by "C.G.": "Kohl's Stance On Border Issue "Ambiguous"" , Frankfurter Allgemeine, in German 14 Dec 89. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-89-240, 59.

29. From news conference with Premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Warsaw Domestic Service in Polish 21 Feb 90. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-036, 62.

30. "The start of the process whereby the German people acquire state unity is possible only with fullest respect for and nonquestioning of the borders existing today between both German states and their neighbors." , speech by Premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki at Sejm Session in Warsaw (expose), 18 Jan 90.

In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-013, 56.

31. In February 1990 Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski visited FRG, and during press conference he said: "We would like to avoid a move of NATO to the east...One must not forget that the Soviet troops, however reduced, will remain on the GDR's territory."

In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-027, 51.

32. From a one-day meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Committee of Defence Ministers in Berlin, 15 June 90.

Polish National Defence Minister Gen. Florian Siwicki: "The still existing feeling of common interests is the foundation for the further existence of the Warsaw Treaty. The point is that together we can have greater influence on the process of building European security than alone. Nonetheless, it is necessary to adjust the pact to contemporary needs so that it can function as NATO's partner"

Vice Minister Janusz Onyszkiewicz: "We think that this should be a consultative pact, that is why deep changes are necessary in the functioning of its military structure. There will however be room for us in it as long as it covers a large group of states."

In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-116, 38.

33.18 Jan 1990 Tadeusz Mazowiecki, in his first speech as Polish Premier at a Sejm Session in Warsaw, proposed to create a pan-European political structure - permanent Council for European Cooperation: "Its task would be to maintain permanent political dialogue among all participating states and, above all, to pave the way for pan-European forms of integration."

In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-013, 57.

34. From the speech by Polish Premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki at the European Parliament in Brussels on 1 February 90.

In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-027, 55.

35. East Germany's Parliament.

36. These important events have been completed by Germany's promise of "full support to the Polish desire to associate with the European Community". From the speech by FRG Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher at the signing of the Polish-German Border Treaty in Warsaw 14 Nov 90.

In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-221, 41.

37. To be honest, some Polish proposals forwarded during the course of preparation for the "two-plus-four" (two German states plus four Powers which guaranteed the Potsdam Treaty) conference met with apparent understanding from the Soviet delegation. But the conference was not a genuine forum. The USSR ensured its strategic interests through bilateral negotiations with Bonn. In July 1990, during the Gorbachev-Kohl talks the Soviet Union agreed to a united Germany's full sovereignty and membership in NATO in exchange for economic and financial aid. A question, whether the Soviet authorities at least informed Polish leaders (or leaders of any Warsaw Pact state) of their plans concerning this vital issue for Poland, has never been clearly explained.

The Soviet officials have still tried to play the "German card". In November 1990, interviewed by a Polish journalist, Soviet Ambassador to Poland Yuriy Kashlev said: "(Soviet) troops appeared here not like in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. They are stationed on former German territories, now Polish. These were our troops that offered Poland these territories and if soldiers live in any houses there, these are houses which used to belong to Germans."

Interview with Soviet Ambassador to Poland Yuriy Kashley by Jerzy Domanski "Partners", Szstandar Mlodych, in Polish, Warsaw 9-11 Nov 90, 3.

38. Krzysztof Gottesman report "The FPD Plays its Cards", Rzeczpospolita, in Polish 2 Oct 90, 2.

39.In Polish Foreign Minister Skubiszewski's opinion a question of recognition of the Baltic republic did not exist because: "the government of independent Poland never recognized the Annexation Act of 1940".

Report on news conference by Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Warsaw Domestic Service in Polish 1800 GMT 14 Jan 91. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-91-010, 36.

40.22 Jan 91 during a press conference Polish Foreign Minister Skubiszewski stated: "We agreed with the foreign ministers of Hungary and Czechoslovakia that the military structures of the Warsaw Pact should be dissolved in mid-1991. My proposal concerning new alliance agreements with former socialist states met a big interest."

Report on news conference by Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Warsaw PAP in English 2220 GMT 22 Jan 91.

Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-91-015, 28.

41.On 30 Nov 90 Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski invited to take a part in the North Assembly said in part: "I am of the opinion that the North Atlantic Treaty, as a vital part of European security, cannot remain indifferent towards Central and Eastern Europe, where unrest or tension and conflict may take place"

Warsaw PAP in English 2142 GMT, 30 Nov 90. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-223, 27.

42.From a statement by spokesman for the Polish Foreign Ministry Wladyslaw Klaczynski, Warsaw PAP in English 1656 GMT 18 Feb 91. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-91-033, 35.

43.Initially some Polish officials supported an idea of "armed neutrality". Finally another concept prevailed that of the necessity of seeking close cooperation with NATO. The concept of military neutrality has been treated as a temporary phenomenon, a natural result of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

See interview with Minister of National Defense Vice Admiral Piotr Kolodziejczyk "The Army of a Neutral Country", Zycie Warszawy in Polish, Warsaw 6 Feb 91, 1,3), and interview with Polish Premier Jan K. Bielecki for Die Welt in German, 4 Mar 91, 11. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-91-044, 42).

44.From an address to the Sejm on security issues by Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski.

Warsaw Domestic Service in Polish 0833 GMT 14 Feb 91. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily

Report Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-91-032, 27.

45. Poland has developed close regional cooperation with Hungary and Czechoslovakia within the so-called Visegrad Triangle (Visegrad Group), and has been an active member of the Council of the Baltic States, as well as the Central European Initiative (the Heksagonale).

46. The quotation from an interview with Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski. Warsaw Rzeczpospolita in Polish 26 Mar 1991, 7.

47. Also on 2 Nov 1992 Polish President Lech Walesa gave a speech: "Tenets of the Polish Security Policy", which included a clear statement of the main assumptions of Polish security policy: future membership in the European Community and NATO as its fundamental aim, support for the United States military presence in Europe, and a desire to establish close regional cooperation within the Visegrad Group and with new independent states that emerged after collapse of the Soviet Union.

PAI-Press, Material and Documents, No.11-12/92.

48. See comments concerning the current Polish-Russian relationships by Jerzy Nowakowski, Rzeczpospolita in Polish, Warsaw 20-21 May 1995.

49. "The government I head is striving for full-fledged integration with the NATO defense system and is ready to undertake the accompanying commitment" - interview with Polish Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy .

Warsaw POLSKA ZBROJNA in Polish 25 Sep 95, p.1-2. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, 27 Sep 95, p. 47.

"A firm majority (71 per cent) of Poles would declare in favor of Poland's accession to the European Union and NATO if a referendum were held on that issue tomorrow" - basing the claim on a poll conducted 5-7 Aug 95 by DEMOSKOP.

Wroclaw GAZETA ROBOTNICZA in Polish 23 Aug 95, p.3. In English translation: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Eastern Europe, 31 Aug 95, p.55.

50. Launched in 1991, the Visegrad Group is a loose form of regional cooperation which included the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The Czech Republic strongly opposed any attempts by Poland and Hungary to transform the Visegrad Group into an institutionalized structure for political cooperation. In the Czech leaders' opinion it can be an obstacle for efforts to obtain membership in Euro-Atlantic structures by the Czech Republic.

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